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A

LETTER

TO

DAVID GARRICK, Esq.

SIR,

IT is in deference to the opinion of some well-meaning friends, who seem to think the chastisement bestowed on your friend Roscius extremely severe, and that such severity requires the apology of a particular provocation, that I trouble you with this address. For my own part, I neither think him treated with sufficient severity; nor, if he were, that any such apology is necessary. On the contrary, I regard this notion of my friends as a mark of that selfish and narrow-minded disposition, which actuates the generality of mankind; and as a proof of the general misconception of the province and privileges of the satyrist; who is thus mistakenly supposed to stand in need of a personal injury to justify his reprehension of the vices or follies of others. It is indeed totally incompatible with the liberality of his character and those public-spirited motives, which are presumed to animate his zeal and inspire his sentiments. A champion in the cause of truth, he enters not the lists to avenge his own wrongs, but those of society. It is not requisite the false knight he encounters, should have particularly offended him: it is enough that he is recreant to the interests of community and humanity in general. A spirit of chivalry and poetical licence, may indeed carry him sometimes, from the warmth of indignation, a little too far in his chastisement of individuals; but the generosity and disinterested-

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neſs of his motives were ever admitted to excuſe, if not to juſtify, the effects of ſo laudable an enthuſiaſm.

Such, in as poliſhed and virtuous ages at leaſt as the preſent, were the character and prerogatives of the ſatyriſt. We have now indeed no knight-errants but in politics; public freedom ſtill boaſts a defender in Mr. Wilkes: the champions of the moral world expired with his friend Churchill. It is no wonder, therefore, if the monſters and peſts of ſociety have ſo greatly of late gained ground upon us: nor will it be more to be wondered at, if, their enormities being winked at as they have been, they ſhould ſtill gain greater ground, to the utter deſtruction of our national character, and the diffuſion of an univerſal degeneracy of manners. Nothing can more contribute to this, than our miſtaken lenity, in treating ſuſpicious characters with perſonal reſpect,

"Till their broad ſhame come ſtaring in the face,"

and they expoſe themſelves to be objects of public deteſtation. What would become of the chaſtity, and what ſhould we think of the modeſty, of the fair-ſex, if coquetry were to be countenanced, and female levity encouraged, till they ripened into proſtitution? What would become even of the morals of men, if vices of every kind were not to be nipped in the bud, and immorality diſcountenanced in the firſt and earlieſt ſtages of guilt? Are we to wink at theft till it grow bold enough for robbery? to put up with violence till it proceed to murder? It is thus indeed that the mercenaries of juſtice eventually co-operate to promote the perpetration of capital crimes; a petty criminal is not worth their purſuit. This may be a plea with Fielding's myrmidons, but ſure it is to the credit and intereſt of the reſt of the world, to check the firſt, and diſcourage the moſt diſtant, appearance of evil. It is one thing to ſave from ruin, and another to ſhun the ruined; if the latter be prudent, the former is virtuous: the prevention of crimes is more humane than the execution of criminals. It is alſo of more uſe to ſociety, eſpecially when both the crime and puniſhment are induſtriouſly conſigned to oblivion.

It is obſerved, as a remarkable inſtance of the modeſty of our Engliſh laws, that the crime againſt nature is denominated *nameleſs*, or not fit to be

be named among Chriſtians: an argument this in favour of the virtue of our anceſtors; in times when ſo unnatural a fact was hardly ever heard of, it was natural to forbear giving ſo abhorred an idea a name. The language of the divine law, however, is leſs modiſhly delicate; nor can I think the ſqueamiſhneſs of our municipal ſtile, in times ſo groſſly depraved as the preſent, of any utility, either political or moral. It is indeed attended with a palpable abſurdity, while our courts of juſtice treat ſo groſs a depravity with evident lenity. On the completion of the horrid act, it is true, the laws give the judges no diſcretionary power; but ſurely there is the ſame criminality, as far as concerns the intention of the aſſailant, which in this caſe chiefly conſtitutes the crime, in a palpable attempt as in the actual perpetration! And yet ſuch attempts, though *in actu proximo*, are uſually puniſhed by a ſhort impriſonment and momentary penance; as if the law thought it ſufficient to expoſe, as a ſcandal to ſociety, the wretch, who muſt have already digeſted the ſhame of being a diſgrace to human-nature.

Again, with reſpect to the publick; ſhocking as the reflection on ſuch ſubjects muſt be to true ſenſibility, the affectation of burying the ſhame and guilt in forgetfulneſs together, is certainly a piece of falſe delicacy; it is in fact reſcuing the culprit from infamy, and is an alleviation of a puniſhment, which will almoſt bear every poſſible aggravation. It is beſides inconſiſtent with our notions of juſticiary puniſhment in every other caſe. That of common felony ends with death; to that of one attended with cruelty or murder, is added the gibbetting of the criminal, in order that the remembrance of his puniſhment may prevent the repetition of his crime. In the caſe in queſtion, confeſſedly the moſt odious of all crimes, both that and its puniſhment are carefully hid under the veil of ſecrecy; as if juſtice itſelf were aſhamed of avenging the outrages which the monſters of ſociety commit againſt nature.

The moral utility, therefore, of applying the rod of ridicule to this falſe delicacy of moral ſentiment and impolitic lenity in the practice of our laws, was a powerful call on the ſatiriſt; who, zealous for the honour

of his country, and the dignity of human nature, could not but glow with indignation at the frequent inſtances of a ſhameful abuſe of both.

It was the misfortune of Roſcius, Sir, if not his fault, to have been inſtrumental in the cultivation of this falſe delicacy and impolitic lenity. But I will not call his predilection for Nyky merely a misfortune; that ſuch it proves, is the common conſequence of ſhame being attendant on vice, and mortification on folly and imprudence. Poſſeſſed of the above ſentiments, therefore, I took, what I conceived, not only a juſtifiable liberty, but a laudable reſolution, in giving looſe to a ſatirical vein, which opened itſelf, on the late abrupt diſappearance of his favourite. I can truly aver, Sir, it was from theſe motives, and theſe only, that I took up the pen to ſcribble the *Lamentation of Roſcius for the loſs of his Nyky*; a publication of which, as a poetical performance, not the prejudiced Roſcius himſelf can have a meaner opinion than its author. I do not pique myſelf on the literary merit of a lampoon. The truth is, it was the produce of a few idle hours, intended for a very narrow circulation; and would probably have never reached the public eye, had not the inſolence of one brother, and the petulance of the other, in a manner dragged it from its deſtined obſcurity. The friends of Roſcius, it is true, have been pleaſed to repreſent it as a cruel attack on his character, commenced on the meaneſt motives, and carried on with the moſt intereſted views. There is indeed ſcarce an inſtigation, by which the human heart is moved to do evil, to which one or other of them has not imputed this lamentable production; the eſſence, according to them, of envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableneſs. The fact is, that your advocates, having little or nothing to ſay, in defence of their client, have punctually followed Quintilian's advice in aſperſing the adverſary. *Si nihil quod nos adjuvet, erit, quæramus quid adverſarium lædat.* His performance, ſay they, contains a deteſtable charge againſt Roſcius, whom it places on a footing with Nyky.

On the other hand, there are thoſe, who find nothing of this atrocious charge, but, leſs out of partiality to the writer, than regard for the honour of our age and country, conceive it a moſt ſalutary chaſtiſement

of

of Roſcius; and at the ſame time an opportune reprehenſion of that backwardneſs in men of character, to ſtigmatize on ſuſpicion thoſe effeminate wretches, who are become ſo horrid a nuſance to ſociety. If ſuſpicion indeed be totally groundleſs, ſuch delicacy is commendable; but this is ſeldom, if ever, the caſe. Why then not expreſs a diſguſt, or diſplay a reſerve, equal to the ſtrength of thoſe grounds? In avoiding a man as fraudulent, or even accuſing him of petty larceny, do we charge him with a robbery on the high-way? Muſt not a culprit be whipped at the cart's-tail, becauſe truly he does not yet deſerve to be hanged? No, Sir, had I conceived Roſcius to ſtand in the odious predicament of Nyky, the pen of the ſatiriſt ſhould have lain ſtill. I differ from Juvenal and Perſius, in thinking crimes of ſuch enormous guilt proper ſubjects for ſatire. Objects of horror are no topics of humour. To laſh ſuch wretches as Nyky, would have been to aſſume the office of a common executioner; the ſhameleſs and abandoned are not the objects of ridicule;

> That ſacred weapon, left for truth's defence
> Sole dread of folly, vice and inſolence.

They only are the proper objects of ſatire, who have ſtill ſenſibility enough to feel the ſenſe of ſhame;

> Safe from the bar, the pulpit, and the throne,
> Who're touch'd and ſham'd by ridicule alone.

Thus, Sir, have I exculpated Roſcius even in his caſtigation; his extreme ſenſibility of which is, at the ſame time, no indifferent compliment to his virtue.

What the lawyers will make of it, I know not; but the plain purport of the performance in queſtion, is moſt evidently and ſolely that of turning Roſcius into ridicule, for having encouraged, as a writer, out of principles of avarice and vanity, a wretch, whom he had reaſon to deteſt, or at leaſt, cautiouſly to ſhun, as a man.

It has been well obſerved on this occaſion, that "there is a ſpecies of "criminality in countenancing the vicious, even when we deteſt their "vices, though it will hardly be thought the vices of thoſe can be very "deteſtable to us, whom we continue to protect and encourage, particu-"larly in the caſe in queſtion." The ludicrous palliatives, therefore, put into the mouth of Roſcius, are juſtifiable ſtrokes of irony, unleſs it were in his power to diſprove his having had ſufficient reaſon to ſuſpect the abominable diſpoſition of Nyky. There are indeed ſome, who would look on the whole as a very innocent, if not inſipid, performance, if the application of the name of Roſcius were not ſo very obvious. Theſe are ever ready to exclaim

None but yourſelf by name the guilty laſh;
Ev'n Gurney ſaves half Newgate by a daſh;
Spare then the perſon and expoſe the vice.

The retort, however, is as ready;

How, Sir! not damn the ſharper, but the dice!

It has been the privilege of the free-born ſatiriſt in all ages, from the antient Ariſtophanes to the preſent, to exhibit any public character, he might fix on, to make the object of his ridicule. The author of the Clouds even pitched on that of Socrates; ſurely as reſpectable as our modern Roſcius. Nay, many of the odes and epodes of Horace are mere lampoons on private perſons his particular enemies.

But I plead not the example of Horace, nor the practice of Ariſtophanes: to come to later times, I would aſk, what would have become of Pope, Whitehead, and Churchill, if they had been proſecuted with virulence for all the libels, which a cunning lawyer might, by the help of inferences and innuendoes, diſcover in their writings? What would become of our modern Ariſtophanes, if he were perſecuted in the ſame litigious manner; for exhibiting the moral and perſonal defects of vicious or ridiculous individuals? Nay, Sir, what would long ago have become of Roſcius himſelf, if he had been thus proſecuted, or even juſtly chaſtiſed, for

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turning the natural and harmleſs imperfections of others into the ſevereſt ridicule? What ſhall we ſay to his commencing a proſecution againſt the publiſher of a paltry lampoon, in which he is juſtly laſhed for egregious and inexcuſable folly in countenancing a man ſuſpected of unnatural propenſities; when we reflect on the cruel and fatal effects of his pointed ridicule, in taking off the natural defects and inoffenſive peculiarities of every reſpectable perſon of his own profeſſion, that ſtood in the way of his advancement, when he firſt entered on his theatrical career? Mills, Ryan and ſome others, indeed, ſupported themſelves like men under that ſtorm of laughter which the cruel mimick ſo wantonly, ſo inhumanly, raiſed, to overwhelm them with contempt. But one would be tempted to imagine that the actual appearance of the ghoſt of honeſt Delane muſt have taught him to aſſume thoſe natural expreſſions of horrour, he exhibits on ſight of the fictitious one in Hamlet.

What excluſive privilege hath Roſcius to act lampoons which it were libellous, in others to write? What prerogative to exempt him from being attacked as he has attacked others? *Nec lex juſtior ulla, &c.* is an old adage, and the juſtice of the *lex talionis* univerſally admitted. Were it even otherwiſe, and Roſcius could plead exemption from the liberty taken with public characters, there is a reaſon which, as Dryden obſerves, may juſtify any poet when he writes againſt a particular perſon; and that is, when he becomes a public nuſance. "It is an action of virtue," ſays he, "to make examples of "vicious and fooliſh men. They may and ought to be upbraided with "their crimes and follies; both for their own amendment, if they "are not yet incorrigible, and for the terror of others, to hinder them from "falling into thoſe enormities which they ſee ſo ſeverely puniſhed in the "perſons of others.—This is abſolutely a poet's office to perform."

Now, Sir, it will hardly be denied, that the fair countenance and familiarity, which long ſubſiſted between Roſcius and Nyky, (ſetting the odious idea of criminality out of the queſtion) was become at length a public nuſance. The parafitical ſervility, to ſay no worſe of it, with which the latter clung round the heels, and was ever at the beck, of the former, is well known to thoſe, who, diſguſted at ſuch ungentlemanlike, ſuch unmanly behaviour, abſented themſelves on this account from the theatrical and domeſtic

meſtic levees of the manager. At the ſame time, the affected burſts of adulation and intemperate applauſe, with which the admiring Nyky uſed to alarm and diſturb the audience, when his patron performed, are ſufficiently notorious.

I will go no farther, therefore, at preſent, in illuſtrating the deſign, or juſtifying the execution, of the lampoon in queſtion. If an artful pleader can make out an appearance of the pretended charge, and a *conſcientious* jury be ſo far impoſed on as to believe it real, the publiſhers muſt ſubmit to the judgment of the court. I have too good an opinion, however, both of courts and juries, to think they will judge it more criminal to reproach others, than it is to be the object of reproach; and I will truſt to their candour, whether the public conduct of Roſcius hath not been ſufficiently reproachful. In the mean time, it is but juſtice to exculpate the author, with reſpect to the very illiberal motives before-mentioned; to which his performance and its publication are imputed. It is leſs blameable to commit an actual errour from laudable motives, than from baſe and ſcandalous principles to do a mere innocent act.

The human breaſt harbours not a more general, nor, at the ſame time a meaner paſſion than envy; it is hence no wonder that the cenſure we paſs on others is ſo often attributed to that cauſe: eſpecially if they are of more elevated rank, or are diſtinguiſhed for ſuperior talents, reputation, or ſucceſs in life. It ſometimes happens, indeed, that the enjoyments of the meaneſt of mankind make them objects of envy, even to the great. The ſated epicure

> Calls, happy dog! the beggar at his door;
> And envies thirſt and hunger to the poor.

This, I am convinced, is much oftener the caſe than is imagined; tho' it muſt be confeſſed that wealth and fame are the two moſt oſtenſible objects of envy. Now Roſcius is wealthy and famous; it was but natural, therefore, for men, who are actuated by no public-ſpirited motives themſelves, but bent to impute every thing to a bad cauſe, to pitch upon envy as a leading principle

ciple, on the preſent occaſion. In doing this, however, they did not ſufficiently conſider the different diſpoſition and circumſtances of the parties; the ſuppoſed envious and the envied. As to myſelf, I am by much too ſenſible of the uſe and advantages of money to envy any one the poſſeſſion of it, who is ſo loth to uſe it, and ſo incapable of enjoying its advantages as Roſcius. It is juſtly obſerved by one of his advocates, that "if he loves money, it can't be denied that he has laboured hard for it." No, nor that he labours juſt as hard to keep what he has got; and to add accumulating heaps to his ſtore.

Fervet avaritia miſeroque cupidine pectus.

Believe me, Sir, I could as ſoon envy a careleſs prodigal, but one degree above want, as a craving miſer, who lives in conſtant fear of loſing and anxiety to increaſe, what he poſſeſſes. But Roſcius is famous: he is celebrated both as a poet and a player. He is ſo; but his ſuperiority in the firſt character may well paſs unenvied, as it is ſo greatly eclipſed by that of the laſt. Roſcius, though much inferiour to what he has been, is certainly the beſt comedian of the age. But what is the profeſſion of a comedian, that even the beſt, the moſt celebrated of them ſhould be an object of envy with a ſenſible man?

What, aſks Rouſſeau, is the merit of his ſo much boaſted talents? "It is," ſays he, "the merit of playing the cheat; of aſſuming a character foreign to himſelf, and appearing different from what he really is. It is that of the art of flying into a paſſion in cold blood; of ſaying, what he does not think, as naturally as if he really thought it. It is, in ſhort, that of forgetting himſelf to perſonate others."—"What," continues this ſhrewd and ſenſible writer, "is the profeſſion of a comedian? It is a profeſſion in which a man exhibits himſelf a publick ſpectacle for money: a profeſſion in the practice of which he ſubmits to take inſults and affronts from thoſe, who think they purchaſe, with pence, a right to treat him ignominiouſly: a profeſſion, in ſhort, in which he expoſes his perſon to publick ſale. Tell me, I conjure you, and every ingenuous mind, whether you do not think, in ſincerity of heart, that this practice hath ſomething in it ſervile and baſe. What kind of ſpirit can a comedian imbibe from it? Certainly a ſpirit of

lying, meanneſs, ridicule and vanity; a low verſatility, which qualifies him for acting every character in life, but that which he throws aſide and is the nobleſt of all, the character of a man." Who that would preſerve this character, then, can envy a comedian, even though it be Roſcius himſelf? I do not mean here to caſt any reflection on our preſent performers, I am ſenſible that very many of them would do honour to a more reſpectable profeſſion, and it is to be lamented that the beſt player ſhould only be the worſt man among them.

It is true that Mr. Wilkes has occaſionally applied to him the eulogium, which Cicero made on the Roſcius of ancient Rome: but it ſhould be remembered that Cicero was pleading for his client, and Mr. Wilkes was paying a compliment to popularity. The return, which the Roman Roſcius made to Cicero, was noble and great; he endeavoured to prove himſelf deſerving the praiſe beſtowed on him. That of our Engliſh Roſcius to his friend Wilkes was juſt as low and little; he gave his encomiaſt the lie, the next time he mounted the ſtage, by particularly pointing againſt him an obnoxious paſſage in the part of Lord Haſtings, about popular demagogues and public liberty.

But Roſcius, ſays another of his advocates, "may be envied for his familiarity with the great." So may their pimps, paraſites and pathics! Is it for their morals or their buffoonery that players are ſo familiar with the great? Unleſs the great themſelves were more reſpectable for their good qualities, their familiarity with a player ſhould no more excite the envy of a rational being, than his lordſhip's familiarity with his monkey, or my lady's fondneſs for her lap-dog. Perſonal intimacy under an imparity of circumſtances is attended with many mortifications to inferiours; eſpecially to men of genius and ſpirit; who, if equal in fortune, would be above cultivating ſuch intimacy. Not but that the favour of the rich and powerful is the road to wealth and preferment in moſt profeſſions; but there ſubſiſts no longer that neceſſary connection between the literary and the great world which was ſo remarkable in former ages. Otway literally begged his bread, with his Orphan in his hand, and yet periſhed for want of it at laſt. But ſince literature hath become an object of commerce, the labours of

of the author are a ſtaple commodity and the man of letters an independant trader: his independency increaſing in proportion to his talents, like that of the artiſt or artificer, who vends only his own manufactures, which others are prohibited to imitate. Hence the ſcholar and the man of genius has no more reaſon to court the protection, or ſeek the familiarity, of the great, than a tradeſman in Cheapſide or a merchant on the Royal Exchange. While the publick is their patron, they need pay homage to no private Mæcenas.

It is indeed a kind of inſolence and impertinence in the modern great, many of whom have riſen from the dregs of the people and more of whom are as void of literature as urbanity, to expect the gratuitous attendance of either a man of genius, ſcience or erudition.

> Enough for half the greateſt of theſe days,
> To 'ſcape his cenſure, not expect his praiſe.
> Are they not rich? What more can they pretend?
> Dare they to hope a poet for their friend?

Men of mean minds may indeed ſacrifice their independency to their vanity, as the inferior ranks of life ſo frequently do; but if they conſulted their eaſe and intereſt, they would wiſh to have no commerce with the great, that is not attended with ſome kind of profit. You, Sir, indeed, who ſo well know even to profit by your vanity, yet endeavour, as far as your influence extends, to check this commercial ſpirit in others and to transfer that dependency, which writers formerly ſtood in reſpecting the great, to their ſituation in reſpect to the theatre. The ſtage hath been ſtiled the poet's mine of wealth; but it is a mine, in which, with the true ſpirit of avarice and inſolence, you would have him dig the ore, like the poor Indian for the haughty Spaniard, ſolely for your own honour, for your own emolument. The advocates of Roſcius have even repreſented him as dealing out the dole of charitable diſtribution among his dependent beggars the dramatic poets. It is Roſcius's private purſe they would erect into a mount of piety, in which is centered every ſource of liberality and reward, that flows from the public ſenſe of dramatic or theatrical merit. Shame on ſuch mean-

neſs! Like the idolatrous prieſts of Bel, they contend for the credit of their idol, that they may ſhare the fragments of the feaſt provided for him by blind devotion. The time will come, however, when this all-devouring mock-deity will be found to be nothing more than a thing "of clay within and braſs without," a groſs impoſition on the populace!

Another motive, to which the lampoon in queſtion is imputed, is hatred: but hatred is often involuntary where it exiſts, and juſtly to be incurred where it exiſts not. I know not that I have ſufficient reaſon to hate Roſcius, though it is certain I ever cordially hated, and that in a manner from inſtinct, the deteſtable Nyky.

I cannot help it, but 'tis from my ſoul,
I hate a raſcal and deſpiſe a fool.

Here then I plead in ſome meaſure, guilty; which I cannot do to the next charge, of malice or implacability. I do not mean to inculcate that I have no cauſe of offence againſt Roſcius, becauſe I aver it was not the original motive of my ſatire: juſtifiable as my private reſentment may be thought, that alone would not have been with me a ſufficient incentive for ſo ſevere a chaſtiſement. They know little of my diſpoſition, who conceive it capable of foſtering the ſeeds of malice; naturally vindictive, it is too iraſcible to be implacable; though, being never offended without a cauſe, it is ſeldom ſatisfied without a reaſon. To forget and forgive is a chriſtian precept, and would be as moral as it is pious, did not the very ſlovenly practice of it give daily occaſion for its repetition. They are ſeldom very cautious of offending in the morning, who know they ſhall be forgiven at night: and hence it is that we ſee ſo many mortal enemies, over night, ſhaking hands and the beſt friends again in the world, in the morning. But this is mere boys-play; it is converting the buſineſs of life and converſation of men into the ſquabbles and frowardneſs of children.

To come to the laſt and moſt exceptionable motive of all, that of ingratitude. I am taxed, Sir, with behaving to Roſcius with ingratitude!

If

If it were ſo, it were a grievous fault;
And grievouſly ought I to anſwer it.

Ingratum ſi dixeris omnia dixeris. To clear myſelf of this aſperſion then, is, to me, a matter of importance. I ſhall claim your attention, therefore, while I recount a ſimple narrative of the few tranſactions, that have paſſed between Roſcius and myſelf; from which it may be gathered whether I have been ungrateful to him, or he unjuſt and inſolent to me.

I enter upon this the more readily, as, however diſagreeable be the taſk of egotiſm, it may ſerve to prevent other writers, who have no other reſource than the ſtage, from being cajoled and trifled with in the ſame manner. At the ſame time it will tend to remove ſome of thoſe imputations, which the pen of abuſe hath of late ſo liberally beſtowed on me, and which may have had their weight with thoſe who have thought it worth while to give attention to ſuch a ſubject.

It is now, Sir, about twenty years ago that, being much fonder of dramatic entertainments than at preſent, I amuſed myſelf with writing the play of Falſtaff's Wedding, in imitation of Shakeſpeare. But as it was neither calculated nor intended for the ſtage, the theatrical managers would never have been troubled with it, had not the author's acquaintance had a much better opinion of it than himſelf. It was in conſequence of its falling into the hands of a friend of yours, in the ſummer of the year fifty-nine, that I was prevailed on, to let him offer it to Roſcius, for repreſentation. His refuſal of it was no other than I expected, though his reaſons for it are ſomewhat ſingular. His reply now lies before me and is verbatim, as follows.

To R—— B——— Eſq.

Dear Sir, *Thurſday, July* 5.

I have read over the play you ſent me with great care. There is in many places, particularly in the character of Falſtaff, a very good imitation of Shakeſpeare, but notwithſtanding that, I think the managers would run a great riſque in bringing it upon the ſtage—We have at preſent no Falſtaff belonging to us, and if we had

I muſt

I muſt be free enough to declare, that I could not venture to bring ſo many of Shakeſpeare's known characters upon the ſtage in a new performance.

I am dear Sir
your moſt obedient
humble ſervant,

D. GARRICK.

The reader, who knows any thing of the play in queſtion, and of the ſtage, will of courſe be apt to wonder what *great riſque* the managers would have run, in getting up a piece attended with ſo little expence and trouble; eſpecially when it was admitted to have merit, as an imitation of Shakeſpeare: a kind of merit ſo very ſingular that it would at leaſt have excuſed them to the town, even ſuppoſing it had not been applauded in the repreſentation.

It is ſomewhat whimſical after ſo many attempts to imitate Shakeſpeare had failed, in ſo much that the very idea of it became exploded; Mr. Pope even ridiculing the beſt of them as reſembling Shakeſpeare only in one line;

And ſo good-morrow to you, good maſter lieutenant:

I ſay it is whimſical that, when the practicability of ſuch imitation was in a manner deſpaired of, a ſubſequent attempt, which had confeſſedly the merit *in many places* of being a *very good* imitation of Shakeſpeare, and that *particularly* in ſo capital a *character as Falſtaff*, ſhould lay the managers under ſuch perilous circumſtances, as to make them afraid to *venture to run the riſque* of bringing it on the ſtage.

Roſcius was not afraid, ſome years before, to bring on a profeſſed imitation of Shakeſpeare, which had confeſſedly no merit, as an imitation, at all. What then could he be now afraid of? What, unleſs, from motives of vanity and avarice, he feared the exhibition of a more ſucceſsful attempt might give the world room to think, that others knew ſomething of Shakeſpeare as well as himſelf; or that, failing of ſucceſs in the exhibition, he might *run the great riſque* of loſing five farthings!— for more it could not well be: yet this he *could not venture* to do.

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One ſhould have thought the plea, of *having no Falſtaff*, a very ſufficient one for his then rejecting the play. That of there being too many of Shakeſpeare's known characters in it, ſeems a very abſurd one, unleſs we are to ſuppoſe that Roſcius had, at that time, laid the plan of his late *immortal* PAGEANT, and was ambitious of the honour of being the firſt to bring on all Shakeſpeare's known characters in a pantomime.

> Fill but his purſe, King David's work is done
> Alike to him by pathos or by pun.

I preſume that they who talk of ingratitude will not pretend I was much obliged to Roſcius for this favour.

But to proceed: The play thus rejected was printed; but the purchaſer of the copy delaying to publiſh it, he was diſcovered to have formed a deſign of getting it on the ſtage himſelf. To this end, he ſecretly tranſmitted a manuſcript copy of it to Mr. Love, then manager of the Edinburgh Theatre; who was preparing, or at leaſt ſoon intended, to get it up; when he left Scotland and came to Drury-Lane. Thus diſappointed in his aim, the proprietor, on the publication of my review of Johnſon's Shakeſpeare, in ſixty-five, thought proper to publiſh it, full ſix years after it had been firſt printed. About this time I became acquainted with Mr. Love, to whom I was till then an utter ſtranger, being introduced to each other by a common acquaintance; when, after ſeveral converſations on the ſubject of Falſtaff's Wedding, it was agreed on between us that, as Roſcius had formerly rejected it, for the reaſons above given, and as it was not ſo well adapted, as it might be, for the ſtage, I ſhould alter it in any manner the manager might think neceſſary; on condition of Mr. Love's having it the firſt night for his benefit; and, in caſe it met with the approbation of the publick, that it ſhould be afterwards performed as uſual, for the emolument of the author.

On theſe terms, Sir, I underſtood the play was put into Roſcius's hands: and except on theſe terms I ſhould not have thought it neceſſary to put it into his hands at all. Had it been, as his advocates have induſtriouſly propa-

propogated, that I ſought out Mr. Love, and voluntarily offered him the play for his benefit, without any future proſpect of emolument to myſelf, I ſhould not have troubled Roſcius about his opinion of it (for that I knew before) nor ſhould I myſelf have taken the trouble to alter it, as he might pleaſe to direct. Indeed the ſuppoſition that a man, rather under than above the world, ſhould throw away ſo much of his time and take ſo much pains merely to oblige a ſtranger, is as abſurd and improbable, as that Roſcius ſhould concern himſelf about the dramatic merit of a piece, to be got up only for a performer's benefit. And yet in a letter of yours, bearing date the ſeventh of February ſixty-ſix, you ſay. " I ſhall take the play " with me next week into the country and ſhall conſider it with great care." On the twenty-firſt of the ſame month, I received alſo the following from Mr. Love.

To WILLIAM KENRICK, Eſq.

SIR, *Belton-ſtreet, Feb. 21.*

Mr. GARRICK has been very much taken up with the buſineſs, diſappointments, &c. of the new play [*meaning the Clandeſtine Marriage*]—but nevertheleſs took your Comedy with him into the country, and, as he ſays, has conſidered it attentively.—I ſhall have it from him to-day, and ſhould be glad to hear when or where I can ſee you, to tell you all he ſays upon the occaſion. He acknowledges great merit in it, and does not ſeem to have found any neceſſity for very material alterations.

I am
your very humble ſervant,

JAMES LOVE.

Nothing can be plainer, from the tenour *and ſtyle* of this letter, than that Mr. Love thought me equally intereſted with himſelf, in Mr. Garrick's approbation of the piece. On ſeeing him indeed he told me that Roſcius, (I give the manager either name, and to avoid the perpetual recurrence of *you* and *I*, uſe either the firſt, ſecond, or third perſon, as it runs moſt eaſily from the pen)—he told, me I ſay, that Roſcius had highly applauded the play, as the only good imitation of Shakeſpeare he had ever met with; that he had even expreſſed himſelf with a kind of enthuſiaſm in its favour, and had promiſed to exert himſelf to the utmoſt in the getting of it up, particularly

larly mentioning that he, Roſcius, would make Mr. Parſons the beſt Juſtice Shallow, that ever trod the ſtage. At the ſame time he gave me ſome hints, which had been thrown out by the Manager, reſpecting the alteration of the piece. On this, I ſet ſeriouſly about adapting it for the ſtage. Unluckily, Roſcius was ſoon after taken, or afraid of being taken, ill, and retired to Bath; where he remained till after the play was performed. He can yet inſtruct his retainers, now, to ſay, "it was not much applauded, though Love's and Kenrick's friends were combined to ſupport it." That Mr. Love ſhould make intereſt among his friends for his benefit, is in the way of his profeſſion; but that I deſired a ſingle friend to take a ticket, or attend the repreſentation, is abſolutely falſe. As to its applauſe, it was not indeed attended with that forced and melancholy clapping, which is mechanically clattered from the partial hands of a paper-raiſed audience; but, if an involuntary roar of laughter, from the beginning to the end of the play, be applauſe; this it certainly had. It is poſſible, if its applauſe had been more doubtful or moderate, it would have better pleaſed the manager, and he would have permitted its repreſentation to be repeated. Not that, as I have ſince found, it could have been well repeated that ſeaſon; the run of the Clandeſtine Marriage not having been over before the benefits began, ſo that ſuch nights as were no benefits, were engaged for that comedy. I made no doubt, however, that it would be permitted to take a run the enſuing winter, agreeable to the terms in which it had been altered and brought on, eſpecially as I had ſold the altered copy, after giving the refuſal of it to the proprietor of the former, to a particular friend of Mr. Garrick's; who, being about that time at Bath, had converſed with him on the ſubject, and could not but be ſuppoſed to know his then opinion and intention reſpecting it. For my own part, indeed, I then knew ſo little of Roſcius, his diſpoſition, and manœuvres, that I made a full dependance on it. Nay, ſo fooliſhly confident was I of the Manager's good diſpoſition to encourage any thing elſe from the ſame hand, that I informed him ſoon after of my deſign of writing a comedy in the modern taſte; deſiring to know if he could alſo bring that on, the enſuing winter. To this application I received the following anſwer.

To Mr. KENRICK.

SIR, *Hampton, May* 31, 1766.

We have ſix performances at preſent in our hands, ſome of which were received before I went abroad, three of them are only farces. I ſhall produce them as faſt as I can; but till we know their fate, it is impoſſible to ſay that we can act another new comedy next winter. If Mr. Kenrick will put his play into my hands, he may depend upon every advantage in my power, that I can confer with juſtice to other gentlemen. In the pieces I have mentioned above, I do not include the revived plays, which will take up ſome part of the ſeaſon. If Mr. Kenrick's play is approved of, I will promiſe for myſelf and Mr. Lacy to bring it on the ſtage either this next winter or the following winter. Should any circumſtance diſappoint us of any of the performances we have fixed for repreſentation, Mr. Kenrick's play will be forwarded in its turn. Could I be favoured with a ſight of two acts only, I can with juſtice put it down for the next in turn, and will candidly give my opinion, though I ſhall not dare to *correct* the works of a much ablet maſter than myſelf. Mr. Colman and his partner in the clandeſtine Marriage are much flattered with your opinion of their play.

I am, SIR,

your moſt humble ſervant,

D. GARRICK.

I had ſaid ſomething, it ſeems, in my letter about ſubmitting my new piece to the manager's *correction*, as I had done Falſtaff's Wedding; which, being now in his hands, I could make no doubt of his bringing it on the next winter, though he could not promiſe to bring me on *another new comedy* till the winter following. Other buſineſs, therefore, intervening, I deferred writing my intended comedy to a future opportunity; expecting, nevertheleſs, as the next ſeaſon advanced, to ſee Falſtaff's Wedding again appear on the ſtage. But in this I counted without mine hoſt. In the beginning of the ſeaſon it was too early, and at the latter end it was too late. In ſhort, I found that, without involving both Mr. Love and myſelf in an open rupture with Roſcius, and by ſo doing get the doors of the theatre ſhut againſt any future piece, I could not inſiſt on having juſtice done to Falſtaff's Wedding that ſeaſon. Waiting a more favourable opportunity, therefore, I puſhed the acceptance of a new piece; which I expreſſed my determination, however, of not ſetting about to write, till I ſhould have aſſurance given me of its being

being brought on the enſuing winter. This being done about the beginning of July 1767, I wrote the Widowed Wife, and put it into the Manager's Hands about the latter end of Auguſt; aſſuring him at the ſame time, that, as I was not greatly ambitious of the reputation of a dramatic writer, but turned my thoughts to the ſtage merely with a view of profit, I ſhould be very ready to make any ſuch alterations as he conceived might contribute to enſure the theatrical ſucceſs of the piece. Whether Roſcius was diſpleaſed at ſo frank a declaration, and thought it was depreciating the walk in which he himſelf excelled; or whether he was predetermined to find ſo much alteration neceſſary as to give him a plea for the very expreſſive hint he afterwards dropped, I know not; but many alterations were ſuggeſted and adopted, with all apparent ingenuouſneſs on his ſide, and equal obſequiouſneſs on mine. That the play is the worſe for them, I do not ſay; but this is certain, that, as the character of Alderman Lombard at firſt run through the whole piece, it had not that grave and *ſombre* caſt, which now too much prevails in it. Indeed the pleaſantry of this character ſo ſtruck the performer, on its being firſt read to him, that he exclaimed emphatically, "If I play that part, it will "be the making of me." Full half this part was cut out, at the ſuggeſtion of Roſcius, for no other reaſon than that the play was too long. I have ſince had room indeed to think there was at the bottom a different reaſon; the manager did not chuſe to give ſo advantageous an opportunity to the performer. Be this as it may, the play was repreſented; and, though brought out at a bad time of year, and attended with ſeveral diſappointments and interruptions, on account of the performers, it met with tolerable ſucceſs; at leaſt with ſuch as ſatisfied me, who ſay with Horace,

———Valeat res ludicra, ſi me
Palma negata macrum, donata reducit opimum.

or, as it is better ſaid by his imitator, Pope,

Farewell the ſtage! If juſt as thrives the play,
The ſilly bard grows fat, or falls away.

In this caſe, therefore, I ſhould have thought myſelf under ſome obligation to Roſcius, on account of the Widowed Wife, could I have ſo ſoon forgot his miſmanagement in regard to Falſtaff's Wedding, or had I not been put ſo ſtrongly in mind of it by certain little dirty manœuvres reſpecting the Widowed Wife itſelf.

Till this comedy appeared, it had never been uſual to add an entertainment or after-piece to a new play, on its firſt repreſentation. In conſequence of this, as the whole pieces were now made ſhorter than formerly, they ſcarcely afforded an evening's entertainment. To remedy this inconvenience, a thing that Roſcius pretended to have much at heart, and to have long in vain attempted, authors being fearful that ſuch an addition to their pieces on their firſt repreſentation would be a tacit confeſſion of their weakneſs, he propoſed to me the ſetting the firſt example, as doing a piece of ſervice to the theatre, and a favour to himſelf. I conſented, on condition that no orders ſhould be admitted, as is cuſtomary, the firſt and ſecond nights; but that the piece ſhould be left to ſtand or fall by its own merit. In this I was very probably wrong: as intereſt was my principal motive for writing, it will be thought I ought to have had that principally in view. But, though I loſt ſight of the money, Roſcius did not; but took care to acquaint me by his brother that, if I choſe to have an after-piece on my third nights, I muſt every time pay ten pounds extraordinary for it: thus for doing the theatre a piece of ſervice, and Roſcius a favour, at his own requeſt, I was very obligingly required to pay thirty pounds. For this piece of good management, no doubt, I ought to be very grateful to the liberal-minded Roſcius.

It was an obligation of a ſimilar nature that he conferred on me alſo on the ninth night; againſt which all the little intereſt I made and my friends intended me, was reſerved. It happened that the play, having been frequently interrupted by the indiſpoſition of the performers, it had the honour of being commanded by his Majeſty the ninth time of performance. But royal favour, I found, could not poſſibly, from the cuſtoms of the theatre, be ſuppoſed to extend to an author; and if his friends ſhould form parties to come the ſame night, they muſt be conceived to come to ſee the King, and not to ſee the play. This being the eſtabliſhed law of the theatre, the

the patentees, as I was told, having an excluſive privilege ofmaking a ſhew of his Majeſty, which none muſt reap the profits of but themſelves, I could not in reaſon deſire the cuſtoms of the ſtage to be broken through for me: though I could not help thinking myſelf a little unlucky in being doomed to ſuffer both by their breach and obſervance.

For this, nevertheleſs, I ſuppoſe, I ought to be bound in gratitude to Roſcius; with whom having now frequent occaſions of converſing, the ſubject of Falſtaff's Wedding was brought again and again on the carpet, till I found the tenacious manager ſtill affected to be of his firſt opinion, viz. that he had no Falſtaff in his company, notwithſtanding the acquiſition of Mr. Love, who did the part great juſtice, and met with deſerved applauſe. Nay, this enthuſiaſtic admirer of Shakeſpeare went even ſo far as to tell me the humour of Falſtaff was quite out of date, and would not draw an audience three nights together even in the heart of the ſeaſon. I concluded now, it was in vain to preſs him farther on that ſcore; but, he paſſed great encomiums on the Widowed Wife, and ſeemed deſirous of engaging me to alter ſome old plays for revival, which though I declined, I obtained of him a promiſe, that he would bring on any other new play I ſhould write: obſerving, however, moſt ſignificantly, at the ſame time, that he had had a world of trouble in the alterations of the laſt. To this hint I was deaf, and to that deafneſs I impute, in a great meaſure, the impracticability of my getting another play on ſince. The unexpected ſucceſs of Falſe Delicacy, indeed, ſoon after ſeemed to give that writer a preference, in which I readily acquieſced; though you may well remember I told Roſcius, at the time, that before another ſeaſon was over, the town would be undeceived with reſpect to the merit of that performance; nor did I prove a very falſe prophet.

In May, ſixty-eight, I offered him the choice of a tragedy or comedy for the next year; the tragedy founded on part of the ſtory of Rouſſeau's Eloiſa, whoſe diſtreſs being of a domeſtic kind, I, improperly perhaps, called it of a *popular* nature. In reply to this offer, I was favoured as follows.

To WILLIAM KENRICK, Eſq.

Dear Sir, *May* 6, 1768.

I was in hopes that I ſhould have been able to have called upon you to day at Richmond, in my way to Hampton, but I am prevented by buſineſs. I cannot remember enough of Eloiſa's ſtory to judge of its fitneſs for the ſtage. We have a dramatic performance of great expence to bring out the next winter, and ſome new ones we are already engaged to, ſo that it will be impoſſible to ſay the exact time that we can produce your piece: however, this we can ſay, that if Mr. Kenrick will be pleaſed to let us have any performance before the firſt week in September next, we will moſt certainly produce it to the publick either the next winter or the winter after. Though I am a little alarmed at your *popular* topicks, for the ſtage can be of no party, yet you may be always aſſured of my warmeſt wiſhes and beſt ſervices. I am over head and ears in a law-matter—Heaven ſend me a good deliverance.

I am, dear Sir,

moſt truly your humble ſervant,

D. GARRICK.

Over head and ears in a law-matter!---Law-matters it ſeems are common things with the litigious Roſcius. Heaven ſend thoſe a good deliverance that have to do with him!---The reader will ſee that I am greatly indebted to him, however, for fair promiſes and fine ſpeeches: but we have a homely proverb that ſays, " fair words butter no parſnips," and I poſitively cannot eat parſnips without butter.

What piece of great expence was brought upon the ſtage the enſuing winter I do not recollect; but if I remember right, there were the *Hypocrite* and one or two more pieces of Mr. Bickerſtaff's. And now I have mentioned the name of this writer, I muſt take the liberty to explain a circumſtance, for which perhaps you never could account. Tho' I have not the eye of a lynx, I am not quite ſo purblind, but that I can ſee almoſt as far into a millſtone as he that is picking it. It is cuſtomary, you know, for gentlemen, who write for the ſtage and reſide in town, to call in occaſionally at the ſtage-door, and pay their reſpects in the green-room. Their ſituation with regard to the performers makes it prudent, even if good manners, where obligations

are

are reciprocal, did not require it. It is now, Sir, about four years ſince I ſet my foot behind the ſcenes of Drury-lane theatre. This, I know, and ſo do you, has been noticed as a piece of affected inſolence in me; and an indignity offered to thoſe, to whom I confeſs myſelf obliged. But you are now to know, Sir, it was neither out of inſolence in me, nor diſreſpect to them, that I abſented myſelf from the theatre. You may remember that, in the ſummer of the year ſixty-eight, you played Sir John Brute, to amuſe the king of Denmark; I was that evening behind the ſcenes; when, having fully gratified my curioſity in looking at his majeſty, I retired into the green-room; for I had frequently ſeen you play the character before, and in my life, I think, I never ſaw you play it ſo ill. You were yourſelf ſenſible of it and extremely out of humour. As almoſt every body was crowding to the ſide of the ſcenes to ſtare at the king, I was ſitting alone in the green-room, when you came in from the ſtage, with that wretched paraſite, ſticking to your elbow and ſlobbering in your ear, "that you never performed ſo well, by J—s G—d, in all your life." The wretch ſeemed a little diſconcerted on turning round and ſeeing a witneſs to his meanneſs; but when I afterwards reproached him for it, he very readily retorted, "Sir, I know he plays damnably to night as "well as you, but don't you ſee the man's in an ill humour." This, Sir, was ſufficient to drive me from a place, where I muſt appear to ſtand in any degree in the ſame predicament with ſuch a proſtituted being.

I was indeed very near meeting him again afterwards at your houſe; but you ſaved me that mortification, by handing him out his ſurtout at the parlour-door; as if you were aſhamed, as you ought to have been, of ſuch a viſitor. But I will ſpare you on this ſubject *now*, nor mention the reaſons that afterward confirmed how right I had been in forming a reſolution to avoid Nyky. To return to my tranſactions with Roſcius.

My predictions of the fate of Falſe Delicacy, of which you affected to be doubtful, not being fully accompliſhed till the ſpring of ſixty-nine, when I heard the author had finiſhed another comedy, I determined not to trouble you that year; for though we were threatened with a Word to the Wiſe, I recollected the adage, which ſays, "a fool's bolt is ſoon ſhot." Not that I had

had the leaſt idea, that the ſons of liberty would licentiouſly revenge the cauſe of the patriot on the poet.

Indeed there were not wanting ſome, who moſt invidiouſly inſinuated that I was privy to that illiberal tranſaction. They who conducted it, however, if itwas really the predetermined act of a party, muſt well know to the contrary. I have indeed been frequently honoured with the abuſe of this writer and others, for my ſuppoſed attachment to Mr. Wilkes and his cauſe; an attachment which it was then hinted might be hurtful to me, as an author, from this accident.

As to Mr. Wilkes I have reſpected him ever ſince I knew him, as a gentleman, a man of genius and a ſcholar; his wit and vivacity as a companion were to me attractions irreſiſtible, and his fortitude, as a man, the ſubject of my admiration. As to his cauſe; ſo far as I thought it that of liberty and my country, I eſpouſed it, as the cauſe of every free-born Engliſhman. But I neither officiouſly ſtood forth out of ſeaſon, nor out of character. When Mr. Wilkes returned from exile, abandoned by his powerful friends, and reduced to play a deſperate game, in throwing himſelf on the protection of the publick; my pen and my little intereſt did him poſſibly ſome ſervice: but when men of ſuperior ſtation and abilities adopted his cauſe, I gave way to my betters and retired. Not even Mr. Horne can pretend I did not pay him the reſpect, which, time has ſhewn, was due to his ſuperior reverence. I neither ſtood up as a citizen, though I was entitled to it; nor became a member of the bill of rights, though I was ſolicited. It was not for a man ſo unfortunate in life, as I had been, to enter the career of popularity, or vie with thoſe who have ſince ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed themſelves in the affairs of party. I had beſides, to uſe the phraſe of a certain ingenious ſecretary, "ſomething elſe to do," and I thought the public buſineſs in ſuch good hands, that it would not ſuffer much, if I attended a little to my own.

Among other objects of this attention was the getting a play on the ſtage the next ſeaſon. With this view I wrote to Roſcius (for I was not fond, for the reaſons above given, of viſiting him) the latter end of March, ſeventy; in anſwer to which application I received the incloſed card.

To

To W. KENRICK Eſq.

Monday March 26th.

Mr. Garrick's compliments to Mr. Kenrick, he is very ſorry he had not Mr. K's play at the time he deſired it. He may be aſſured of having his play acted *in its turn*, but it is proper that he ſhould know there are no leſs than three plays to be acted, now in Mr. Garrick's hands, before Mr. Kenrick's can have its turn. If that gentleman will truſt his performance with Mr. Garrick, he will give him his opinion directly and he may be aſſured of having all the juſtice done to it, in Mr. Garrick's power, &c.

The attentive reader will probably obſerve a very ſtriking difference between the ſtile of this card and the preceding letter. In *that*, I might be aſſured of Roſcius's " warmeſt wiſhes and beſt ſervices," who was, " dear Sir, moſt truly my humble ſervant." In *this*, it is " *that gentleman* ſhall " have *juſtice done him* and an opinion given of his piece directly—His " piece ſhall be acted *in its turn*, but it is proper he ſhould know there " are *no leſs* than *three* pieces to be acted before *it can have* its turn." I muſt own, I did not readily enter into this turning and winding; but I have found that Roſcius, as Othello ſays by his wife, " can turn and turn and yet go on and turn again" nay elbow any body elſe out of a turn, on any occaſion, to ſerve his own.

Not rightly underſtanding, I ſay, this cavalier mode of writing; as I conceived that, till my Falſtaff's Wedding ſhould be performed, I was of courſe the FIRST *in turn*, eſpecially as Roſcius had brought out two comedies for Mr. Kelly ſince my Widowed Wife; I deſired an explanation; which was tranſmitted to me in manner following:

To W. KENRICK Eſq.

SIR, *April* 3d, 1770.

Though I wrote my laſt note to you, ſurrounded with company and in great haſte, yet I thought it impoſſible to miſtake my meaning. If none of the pieces I have now in my hands are withdrawn, I cannot promiſe to perform yours in the next ſeaſon. It would not be juſt to put any performance out of its turn, unleſs by the conſent of the author. Mr. Kelly's play was brought to me by King, the beginning of the laſt

 ſummer

ſummer; and it could not have been acted this ſeaſon, had not a tragedy of Mr. M's been withdrawn. Mr. Kenrick ſhall have the greateſt juſtice done him, and to offer more would be no compliment to either of us. I hope he will let me have his *comedy* as ſoon as poſſible, that I may bring it out, in the ſeaſon after the next, as I cannot with honour promiſe more.

I am, Sir,

your very humble ſervant,

D. GARRICK.

In anſwer to this, ſomewhat more explicit, declaration, I remonſtrated that Roſcius appeared to me to have very ſingular notions of *juſtice* and *honour*: that, if it were unjuſt to put any performance out of its turn without the conſent of the author, how came it that Falſtaff's Wedding was not performed? that though I had tacitly ſubmitted to a political neceſſity, I had never conſented to its non-performance; nor ſhould indeed have ſo long acquieſced under it, but for the right I conceived it gave me of being firſt in turn with regard to any new piece: that I required no more than juſtice; which I did not think done me by the manager's inſiſting on having a finiſhed piece in hand two years before it could be performed; eſpecially as in a former letter he admitted that the ſight of *two acts only* would enable him to "put it down *with juſtice* as the *next in turn*." I remonſtrated that I ſhould even have an objection to putting a play into his hands, ſo long before its repreſentation, though it could not of right have its turn ſooner; well apprized of the inconvenience and loſs of time attending the many alterations and re-alterations, ſuggeſted by occaſional and partial readings. I repreſented that, though the profits of a ſucceſsful play might be very acceptable, if it could be done with in the courſe of a few months, it could be worth no man's while to write for the ſtage, who could write any thing elſe, if his piece muſt be kept in agitation two or three years: that the Horatian maxim of *nono prematur in anno* might be a good one, reſpecting a poet's future reputation; but that the *ſcribere cum daſho* was a better for his preſent livelihood: that, therefore, if he would engage to bring on my piece the next winter I would ſend it him; otherwiſe not.

To this remonſtrance, I do not recollect that I received any reply. If I did, I have loſt or miſlaid it.

Matters

Matters ſtood thus when I was informed, about the opening of the next ſeaſon, that he had engaged a very celebrated performer; to whoſe talents a capital part in a new piece, which I had by me, was particularly adapted.

On this information I ſent Roſcius the piece, with a card, aſſigning my reaſons for ſo doing. To this application, however, he did not even deign to honour me with a written anſwer, but ſent me the piece back, under an open cover, by the hands of Becket, the bookſeller; who brought me a verbal meſſage, at the ſame time, importing that I had been miſinformed in regard to the performer; in conſequence of which Roſcius had returned my piece, without having read a ſingle line. Though I could not help conſtruing this piece of rudeneſs, after what had paſſed, into an intentional affront, I took little or no notice of it to the meſſenger; well knowing he would find ſome difficulty to diſtinguiſh between an affront and a compliment: reſerving to myſelf at a proper opportunity, as bound no doubt in gratitude, to thank the manager for his politeneſs. Let us hear no more after this of my *ingratitude* to Roscius.

It will hardly be wondered at, if now I expected neither favour nor *juſtice* of the manager; that I might not be wanting however, to myſelf, I wrote to him again in the ſpring of the year ſeventy one, to know if he would bring me out a play the enſuing ſeaſon. The anſwer I received was to the ſame purport as his laſt letter; he muſt have my piece put into his hands at the beginning of one ſeaſon, or it could not be *in its turn* to be played the ſeaſon after. For the reaſons before given, I declined complying with terms, which appeared to me ſo unjuſt and injurious. That they really were ſo, was made fully evident by his bringing out the very next winter, the Faſhionable Lovers,* a play confeſſedly written within that very year; as appears from the prologue,

This bard breeds regularly once a ſeaſon,

and was of courſe to be regularly delivered: though the author of Falſtaff's Wedding had gone near five years beyond his time, and was not in turn to be attended yet. One would have thought, I might have been included in the

* Alſo if I rightly recollect "'Tis well 'tis no worſe," the claſſical production of Nyky.

general notice, ſo plauſibly given to dramatic adventurers in the ſame prologue.

> If any author of prolific brains
> In this good company feels labour pains;
> If any gentle poet, big with rhime
> Has run his reckoning out and gone his time:
> Know ſuch that at our hoſpital of Muſes
> He may lie in private, if he chuſes;
> We've ſingle lodgings here for ſecret ſinners,
> And good encouragement for young beginners.

One would have thought, I ſay, that, after having ſo far outrun my reckoning and been ſo tedious a while in labour, I might have been delivered of my burthen. But no: I was neither a *gentle poet*, a *young beginner*, nor, what is worſe, a *ſecret ſinner*. I had ſinned indeed too openly and written too roughly to Roſcius ever to be forgiven. I determined, nevertheleſs, in the beginning of June laſt, to write to him once again; which I did in very laconic terms, inſiſting ſomewhat peremptorily on an explicit and ſpeedy anſwer to a very ſimple queſtion, viz. "whether he would or would not bring on my play next winter?" reſerving to myſelf the reſolution, that, if he refuſed to bring on one of my *new* pieces, to inſiſt on his getting up Falſtaff's Wedding, as I conceive I had a right to do: Mr. Garrick in fact being indebted to me, principal and intereſt, of what I might have received as the profits of the exhibition of that play. But a direct anſwer to this plain queſtion, I could not get. On the contrary, I was attended one morning by Mr. George Garrick, with a verbal meſſage from his brother, importing his very earneſt deſire to have a perſonal conference with me, in the preſence of ſome friends; that gentleman expreſſing, at the ſame time, his great ſurpriſe that I ſhould write to his brother in ſo rude a ſtile, when I knew how ready he had been on all occaſions to ſerve and oblige me. I told him I had been too long cajoled by fair promiſes made to my face; that I had been told what Roſcius had ſaid diſreſpectfully of me behind my back and that I knew his diſpoſition toward me too well, to be amuſed any longer: that, if his brother would ſend me an anſwer in writing to the queſtion I aſked (for I would

would not take his word) I would then meet him at any time or place he ſhould chooſe, either with company or without; but without having ſuch written anſwer, I would not have any thing to ſay to him.

The next day I received the following by a ſervant.

To Dr. KENRICK.

SIR, *June* the 14th, 1772.

My brother greatly ſurpriſed me by your refuſal to meet me with or without a friend—Are you conſcious, notwithſtanding your profeſſions of regard for me, that you have acted contrary to thoſe profeſſions?—Be that as it may, as I have ſomething of conſequence to both of us to communicate to you, I muſt again deſire to ſee you—when you have obliged me by naming at what time and place, I ſhall have the pleaſure of ſeeing you to-morrow morning, I will then give you the *ſpeedy and explicit anſwer*, you have rather peremptorily demanded from

Sir,

your humble ſervant

D. GARRICK.

P. S. Though I am engaged to go to the inſtallation of the Knights of the Bath, I ſhall put it off, upon your notice, to attend upon you.

Being myſelf engaged the next morning (though not to the Inſtallation) I acquainted Roſcius by a card, that I would not deprive him of the pleaſure of attending the Knights of the Bath, but that if he would ſend me the anſwer I required, I would meet him the day after, at any place he ſhould appoint: that he might bring with him as many friends as he pleaſed, but that I would come alone; for that I ſhould never admit of a third perſon to adjuſt differences that nobody could judge of ſo well as ourſelves: telling him at the ſame time, that I had long thought myſelf neglected and treated very diſreſpectfully by Mr. Garrick both in words and deeds.

The following is the reply I received to my card.

To Dr. KENRICK.

SIR, *Monday, June* 15.

As you ſay in your card "that you have long thought yourſelf neglected, and treated very diſreſpectfully by Mr. Garrick both in words and deeds," I muſt ſay in anſwer, that the very reverſe is the truth—therefore I think it abſolutely neceſſary, leſt my words and deeds ſhould again be miſunderſtood and miſrepreſented, that we ſhould each of us bring a friend to-morrow morning, nine o'clock at the Green-Park coffee-houſe almoſt over againſt the Duke of Devonſhire's—Could we agree upon a common acquaintance I ſhould deſire his attendance. I thought of ——— ——— if you have no objection, or, if you would name any other gentleman, I ſhall be well ſatisfied. Should I hear nothing from you to day I ſhall ſend to ——— ———, and am

Sir,

your humble ſervant

D. GARRICK.

Being at home when the meſſenger brought the above letter, I returned for anſwer that I had no objection whatever to— —; and that I ſhould meet Roſcius and him according to appointment. This intention, indeed, I changed on the afternoon of the ſame day, for the following reaſon. A bookſeller, with whom I occaſionally do buſineſs, had, it ſeems, met that day with two others of the fraternity, well known for their attachment to Roſcius and Nyky, viz. Meſſrs. Becket and Griffin: the latter of whom had communicated to him his knowledge of the epiſtolary altercation between Mr. Garrick and me; aſſuring him, at the ſame time, "that it was his, [Roſcius's] fixed "reſolution to have no farther connections with ſuch a man as Kenrick; who, "without the leaſt cauſe of offence, had uſed him moſt villainouſly ill; "adding, that it became all Mr. Garrick's friends to avenge his cauſe, and "that he himſelf, who had likewiſe been ill-uſed by Kenrick, would take an "opportunity to do him ſome perſonal miſchief."

Had I been under any apprehenſions from the menaces of ſuch a contemptible booby; I ſhould have diſplayed at leaſt the valour of Capt. Bobadil

on

on the occaſion, and applied to Juſtice Clement to have got him bound over to the peace. But this not being the caſe, I contented myſelf, with venting my reſentment, againſt ſuch un-gentlemanlike behaviour, on Roſcius himſelf, in the following letter; which being repreſented as an arrogant breach of that ſubmiſſion, duty and allegiance, which all play-wrights are ſuppoſed to owe to that king of ſhreds and patches, the manager, I ſhall give it the reader as nearly as I can, *verbatim*.

To DAVID GARRICK, Eſq.

SIR,

As you have thought proper to communicate your mind ſo fully, on the ſubject of our intended meeting, to your runners, Becket and Griffin; the latter of whom hath tranſmitted me, by my publiſher, not only your reſolution, but his own, of taking the firſt opportunity of doing me ſome deſperate injury; I think it needleſs as unſafe to give you the meeting, you ſo earneſtly ſolicit, while you are ſurrounded by raſcals of ſuch a caſt and diſpoſition. At the ſame time, I muſt inform you that, *if you authorize* them ſo publickly to make ſuch vindictive declarations, I ſhall think myſelf under the neceſſity of properly providing for my ſecurity. For, though threatened people generally live long, and I am ever ready to meet a gentleman on a gentleman's footing, I may not always be aware of the bludgeon of a ruffian or the knife of an aſſaſſin. You ſuſpect me to be conſcious of having acted inconſiſtently with the profeſſions of regard I once made you. It is long ſince I made any profeſſion of regard for Mr. Garrick; it is long ſince I had reaſon to have any regard for him. You ſhall not have any reaſon, however, to complain for the future, of my not being ſufficiently your open enemy. As to your bringing on any play of mine, I ſhall not inſiſt on it, till it be a greater honour to rank among Mr. Garrick's literary favourites than it is at preſent.

Yours, &c.

W. KENRICK.

The reader will wonder, perhaps, that I ſhould ſo warmly reſent a ridiculous and idle menace, for which there appears no foundation of threat: but he is to be informed that, it was about this time I had written the lampoon in queſtion, of which I had printed a ſmall number, to diſtribute among my acquaintance, many of whom knew in what manner I had been ill treated both by Roſcius and Nyky; by the former as a theatrical manager,

nager, in the inſtances above related, and by the latter as an a[illegible] by profeſſion, who had not long before, by the aſſiſtance of his croney, Griffin, circumvented me in a literary undertaking, which he engaged to conduct for a certain time for twenty guineas, though the proprietors, moſt of them *honeſt* bookſellers, had actually contracted to pay me a hundred.

It is true, that, by way of mortification, I had advertiſed my lampoon, not as really publiſhed to be ſold, but as ſomething in embrio, or contemplation. The advertiſement, however, was too ſtriking, or the conſciences of the parties too tender, for them not to take a moſt terrible alarm. Roſcius, with his brother, their retainers, authors, printers, and printer's devils, were in an inſtant put in motion; orders were diſpatched to prevent the advertiſement's being inſerted in the *Public Advertiſer*, the *Gazetteer*, the *St. James's Chronicle*, the *London Packet*, and every other popular news-paper, in which Roſcius was either a ſharer, or over which he had any influence. Even the printer of the paper in which it firſt appeared, refuſed, though he had been paid for it, to print it a ſecond time.

It was the information of theſe circumſtances, which was brought me at the ſame time, that raiſed my reſentment. The deſign of laying an embargo on the news-papers, and depriving me of the uſual channels of publication, ſeemed to be ſo daring and inſolent an infringement of the liberty of the preſs, that it determined me to fruſtrate its intention, by printing a greater number of the Eclogue, and prefacing it with a letter to Mr. Garrick, to which I ſubſcribed my name; a circumſtance I have long made it a rule to obſerve when I make a public attack on any one. I underſtand, indeed, that Roſcius affects to think otherwiſe, and that he imputes to me a moſt groſs and infamous anonymous charge, directly brought againſt him, about the ſame time, in the Public Ledger. Nay, I have been told that he makes this his excuſe, for not giving me the explicit anſwer I required, reſpecting my play; and that this was the matter of ſo much conſequence to both of us, which he wanted to confer about. But this could not be, for by recurring to the papers, I find that his two laſt letters are dated the fourteenth and fifteenth of June, whereas the infamous charge abovementioned did not appear till the eighteenth

of

of the ſame month; and I can truly declare, on the word and veracity of a man, that I did not read, or ſee it, till near a month afterwards.

Again Roſcius, or his fooliſh friends, have pretended that the lampoon in queſtion was written merely in order to compel him to bring on my play: which had he conſented to do, I ſhould never have publiſhed it. This is a plea, calculated to impoſe on thoſe, who know nothing of either me or Roſcius, of the fact or of the ſtage. Granting that we both were mean enough, I to menace and he to be intimidated; I know too much of the theatre to think it worth while to have any performance brought on the ſtage, againſt the good-will of the Manager. Add to this, with reſpect to the fact, that the piece was printed and diſtributed among thoſe for whom it was written, without any regard to the ſhort altercation reſpecting the play. And though it is moſt probable, that, if Roſcius had done me the juſtice I had a right to demand of him, inſtead of inſolently threatening me, and exerting his influence to reſtrain the liberty of the preſs, I might have thought the circulation of the few, I firſt printed, a ſufficient chaſtiſement for his folly, in countenancing Nyky; yet that it was firſt written with any other view than the liberal one I have before explained, or that I acquainted Roſcius with my deſign, even in the moſt indirect or diſtant manner, *in terrorem*, before it was printed and diſtributed, is an abſolute falſehood.

Having delivered now, Sir, a round unvarniſhed tale of the riſe, progreſs, and end of our connections, I ſubmit the whole to your ſerious reflection, and to the candour of that impartial publick, whoſe curioſity you have yourſelf, on this occaſion, ſo imprudently contributed to raiſe. If you perſiſt in citing me to appear at the court of King's Bench, be aſſured I will meet you there, and perhaps to your farther confuſion. In the mean time, our cauſe will be tried before the tribunal of the publick; who, now ſufficiently inſtructed, will be able to judge between us, and determine whether I deſerve cenſure, as a wanton calumniator, or you the chaſtiſement received, for having given reaſon for ſo ſevere a reproof.

You may, indeed, continue to abuſe me in your ſeveral news-papers; ſecure in their refuſal to afford me an opportunity of juſtification. You may continue to infringe the liberty of the preſs, by obſtructing the common courſe of publication; but means will certainly be found to get every thing written on this ſubject ſufficiently read; nor ſhall either that general falſe delicacy, ſo favourable to vice, nor the fear of unmerited abuſe from the vicious, deter me from writing.

No: arm'd for virtue, will I point the pen,
Brand the bold front of ſhameful, vicious men;
Yes—my laſt quill in nature's cauſe I'll draw,
Tho' prudence tremble on the edge of law.
Truth guards the poet, ſanctifies the line,
And makes immortal, verſe as mean as mine.

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